

THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND

605 Togen and Matarē told me that their marriages were not really
582 in order, but that they agreed because they were afraid of offending
565 Pinari. In spite of this inauspicious beginning, both marriages
seem to be turning out reasonably well.

9. *Watʼitʼsio* (term used reciprocally).

601 This term is applied by a woman to the children of her cross-
cousins on either side of the house, that is to say, the offspring of
her mother's brother's children or of her father's sister's children,
and by them to her. It will be seen that the reciprocal term applies
to people belonging to an upper and a lower generation, and that
while the lower generation can be either male or female, in the
upper generation the term applies to females only.

604 This is a taboo relationship. The woman of the elder generation
582 may not hold such a child in her arms when it is small, and she
must not touch it when it is grown up. She must never eat in its
● 684 presence. This relationship carries with it a very strong taboo
against marriage, which is somewhat striking in view of the fact
that two persons standing to each other in this relationship are
always of different clans, as will be apparent from the table of
kinship terms. I was informed more than once that in the olden
days the penalty for extra-marital intercourse between *watʼitʼsio*,
if discovered, was death for both. Members of the woman's
lineage would kill the woman, and members of the man's lineage
would kill the man. The woman was then eaten by the man's
[266] lineage-group and the man by the woman's, no retaliation following
on either side. At the present time, they say, all that would happen
is that the couple would be banished from the village.

601 The term *watʼitʼsio* is also used reciprocally between a woman
and the child of her husband's sister (i.e. her husband's *wewnē*-).
604 By extension, it also applies to the child of any other individual
582 who stands to her husband in the relationship of *wewnē*-. But this
does not carry with it so strong a prohibition against marriage,
which, though irregular, is not impossible. Tahol, married to
Tsigot, took as her lover Wasē, son of Rusu, Tsigot's *wewnē*-
(actually his ortho-cousin). After this affair had twice resulted in
pregnancy, Tsigot divorced Tahol, and Wasē married her. In
telling me about this all the individuals concerned laid stress on
the fact that she was not Wasē's *watʼitʼsio tsʼin* ('real' or 'true'
watʼitʼsio) or the marriage would never have been countenanced.

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his brother Palēn, who, of course, was also her *wewnē*-. To him she bore a son Sankuro, who was given his rightful position as tsunaun as though his mother's marriage had been perfectly in order. Sankuro is now a boy of sixteen or thereabouts, so that this affair must have taken place upwards of twenty years ago. But from the vividness with which the whole story was related to me, it must have made a great impression on the village. On the death of Sarumpots, the other protagonist in the drama, his wife Gomar, passed in the natural course of events to his brother Pinari, again her *wewnē*-, whose chief wife she now is, having succeeded to that position after the death of his first wife. The unravelling of the relationship terms involved in the genealogy of this family puzzled me very much, until the mystery was cleared up by the recital of the story given above (see Fig. 6).¹ The fact that the relationship was two generations removed took this marriage out of the category of incest. Had the two couples concerned been blood brothers and sisters, it would under no circumstances have been allowed. I heard of no case of actual brother-sister incest, neither does any instance of it occur in any of the stories in my collection.

Incestuous unions are, however, by no means absent. The worst form of incest is between a man and his sister's daughter (the *tsōa* : *pasu*- relationship). A case of this kind occurred in the village of Kurtatchi some little time before my visit. Wasalau, a man notorious for his sexual laxity, raped his sister's daughter, Poskea, scarcely more than a child. She had a baby, which died at birth. There was a great scandal over the affair. Wasalau was banished from the village by Pinari (who openly regretted that the restrictions imposed by the white man prevented him from putting a spear through him), and will never dare to show his face in it again. Pinari subsequently arranged a marriage for Poskea with the brother of one of his own wives, with whom she now lives, apparently happily.

No case of mother-son incest came within my own experience, but the names of two men, now dead, were given to me as having attempted it without success. It finds a place in my collection of stories, some of which are clearly 'founded on fact', though others are as clearly imaginative or legendary.

Sexual intercourse between father and daughter would appear to occur not infrequently, especially where fully grown daughters, married to men away working as indentured labourers, continue

¹ [See cat. 116, p. 69. -Analyst]

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In speaking of illicit

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583 intercourse with another man's wife, they use the expression *gun*
 [637] *amot*, which is fairly translatable by 'steal' and is applied also to
 acts of theft in the ordinary sense in which we use that term. It is,
 of course, dangerous to rely too much on linguistic evidence, but
 • [684] it is noteworthy that to 'steal' a man's wife and to steal his cere-
 monial currency were once bracketed together, by a man with
 whom I was discussing the subject of theft, as crimes belonging
 to the same category, and that in some cases the same penalty
 has been exacted for both. All the people with whom I discussed
 the matter in relation to marriage gave me the impression that no
 distinction existed in their minds between paying for a wife and
 paying for anything else of importance.

586 The rules governing the operation of the custom are entirely
 compatible with this view. If the woman refuses to perform the
 duties of a wife, her husband can, and does, divorce her and
 demand his currency back—he is not receiving what he paid for
 so he repudiates the purchase. But if she has cause to divorce
 him, he does not get his currency returned to him, the break-down
 of the transaction was not her fault. If she dies without giving
 768 him a child, he will expect to be repaid, unless he receives a sister
 587 in her place. Pinari told me that the currency handed over in
 respect of Riro, the wife of his son Wasē, who had died, childless,
 not very long before my visit, would be returned, except one
 string, which was to be retained by her relatives 'because her
 body stays here', the woman having been buried at Kurtatchi.
 I have not seen a similar custom recorded elsewhere. If her death

845 occurs in child-birth, and the child lives, repayment is made in
 768 part only, one string being retained 'for the child'. But if the
 child dies too, the full amount is usually asked and given. For a
 wife dying after having borne more than one child, no repayment
 is expected—the husband has had his money's worth, so to speak.

562 It does not follow that the woman is regarded as the absolute
 property of the man to do as he likes with. That is definitely not
 581 the case. What seems to me to be the crucial point was put very
 clearly by a woman, Matēv, on our way back from witnessing this
 very transaction, when the matter was naturally the subject of
 conversation. She said:

'Tab to wen nor a kiki pi mon.'

Thing pay we genitals of woman.

i.e. 'What we pay for is the woman's genitals.' That is to say,

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836 to me—there were none at Kurtatchi—the unmarried girls indulged in amours as freely as their married contemporaries, but, like them, were desirous of avoiding pregnancy, fearing that they would then be under some difficulty in obtaining a husband later. But in places where there has been little white contact, I incline to think, though the evidence bearing on the point is rather inferential than direct, that pre-marital intercourse is not, and never has been, prevalent among these natives, to any great extent, in respect of either males or females.

882 In this area the relations between the sexes before marriage
834 must be considered in the light of two circumstances which have a very definite influence upon them. The first is the elaborate hedge of taboos and restrictions surrounding the boys wearing the *upi*, that is to say, all the boys between the ages of about ten and about eighteen. These regulations are—or were at the time of my visit—still strictly binding, or, if broken, so much care is taken that the delinquents are seldom found out. Their effect is to keep the boys completely away from the women and girls, from which it follows that sexual advances are forbidden. One or two cases were reported to me of boys indulging in sexual intercourse while still wearing the *upi*, but they were spoken of with bated breath, and clearly considered very great enormities and quite exceptional.

• [684] This, I believe, indicates the actual position and was not merely the statement of the conventional standpoint. In the olden days, discovery would have been punished with death for both parties.

582 The second factor to be considered is that boys, and more
[164] especially girls, are generally betrothed while still quite small children. I was told of girls who had been betrothed 'before they had yaws', which indicates that they were hardly more than a year old, since this tropical skin disease falls to the lot of practically

584 every child about the age of one or two years. My informants told me that the match was generally arranged by the boy's father, but in practice I found that it was just as likely to be the boy's mother's brother who took the initiative, and that other people also might, and often did, take a hand in the matter. One day, while I was visiting the village of Tabut, a man from Ruri came over to see if he could get a certain young woman as a wife for his sister's son. He was prepared to give two strings of *imun* and some *beroan*, the amount of which he did not state. She was married to a man who is working at Timputs, but he said the man had divorced her,

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though he did not know why. Her relatives would not consent to the match, they said her husband might want her back. As it was near the end of my period of residence, I did not hear whether anything further was done in the matter. In another case, in which all the principals were personally known to me, that of Kakari's marriage to Muben, the match was suggested by Muben's *tsao* (actually the mother's mother's sister's son, but equivalent to the mother's brother). He lived at Kurtatchi, but actually belonged to Baniu, where Muben's mother lived. He was very ambitious, and clearly wanted the marriage because it allied him to the most important family in the district. That is to say, while the initiative usually rests with the boy's family, it may, on occasion, be taken by some relative of the bride's. Again, Pinari, who liked to exercise his authority, saw to it that he had a say in the case of betrothals of any of the young people in his village, even of those not closely related to him, and as he was *tsunaun tsan*, deference was paid to his views.

The betrothal is not absolutely binding until the ceremonial currency has been handed over by the boy's people. This may be done while the girl is still quite small, but it is not necessary, or usual, to do so until her breasts begin to develop. Once arranged, a betrothal is seldom broken, even before the currency has changed hands, and to break it after that is a serious matter. A case came to my notice where a man fell in love with a girl who was already betrothed, and eventually ran away with her. Although the ceremonial exchanges connected with the prospective marriage had not been completed, the affair was regarded as a serious breach of customary rule, but it was finally settled by a payment of ceremonial currency from the lover to the girl's affianced husband. The couple have been living very happily together for several years. They have one child, a boy about a year old, whom both adore. It seems to be a genuine love match, a somewhat rare occurrence among these people.

At the time of betrothal, the boy may be considerably older than the girl, and may have finished his puberty ceremonies and taken off the *upi*, or he may be only slightly older and continue to wear the *upi* for several years subsequently. All except the youngest boys wearing the *upi* at Kurtatchi were already betrothed. The marriage is never consummated till the puberty ceremonies are finished and the *upi* removed, and usually not until the girl has

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593 Sobak treats as if he were his own. She is a hard worker, and lets the other women take advantage of her, making her carry the heaviest loads. Sobak does not make any more demands upon her as regards work than most men make on their wives. He always seems kind to her, and says she is a good wife. I have never heard him talk of beating her. Once she went on a visit to relatives at Hanahan and stayed several days. Sobak was very worried, and told me he was afraid some man there was keeping her away, but all was well when she came back.

[576] Tsonakets has a sister, who was also married at Hanahan, but after her husband's death she came to live in Sobak's household at Kurtatchi, bringing her three little boys. Sobak takes care of them all. In the ordinary way he would have married her, but he does not wish to offend the priest by taking another wife, so he says he is not going to do so.

EXTRA-MARITAL RELATIONS

837 In this society, where marriage at or before arrival at sexual maturity is the rule, it follows that such illicit intercourse as may take place will be between persons each of whom is married to another individual.

837 In the olden days, according to my informants, adultery was regarded as a very serious offence, the penalty for discovery being death to both parties. The man's relatives would be responsible for the exaction of the penalty in the case of the man, and the woman's in the case of the woman, no retaliation being offered on either side. An old cannibal of Saposia further stated that the bodies of such offenders were eaten, but at Kurtatchi they said that this final insult was only for those who committed a particularly abhorrent kind of incest (see p. 68). It seems feasible to suppose that the actual state of affairs may have been idealized a little in reminiscence, and that clandestine intercourse was neither so rare nor so drastically punished as report would lead one to believe. In the tales, honour was often satisfied by a fight, and this is a usual outcome nowadays. In some instances, particularly if the advances of the suitor had been unwelcome, he was taken to the beach, where spears and arrows were shot at him. But apparently he was allowed to shoot in return. In answer to questions, arising out of such stories, I was told that this was a true account of what actually used to happen, not merely a made-up tale. It is noteworthy that the same punishment was meted out to any one caught stealing ceremonial currency.

837 Whatever may have been the state of things in the past, there

881 The men from other villages who took part, by invitation, in the
574 *wapi* ceremony, are not invited to these subsidiary ceremonies,
621 which are for the villages of the *wapi* group only. But after a suitable
interval, usually about a month, there is a feast called *sinēv*, to give
food to all the people who attended the *wapi*, in return for their
presence and the part they took in shouting and attacking. This is
accompanied by a *kōma*. The food, as usual, is not all consumed
at the time, but large quantities are given to the guests to carry
home with them.

REGULATIONS AND PROHIBITIONS FOR WEARERS OF THE *UPI*
DURING THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE *WAPI* AND THE *WATA-
WUTJ* CEREMONIES

I. Concerning women.

882 Boys wearing the *wapi* may not go into any house where a woman
lives, not even their own mother's. Their female relatives may
689 prepare their food, but it must be handed out to them through the
door at the *tagoan* (men's verandah). A boy breaking this rule
[266] would, in the olden days, have been killed, and his body eaten by
the older men. Now they would 'make poison' against him and
his father and mother, so that all three would die. This taboo on
entering a woman's hut is still most meticulously kept.

882 They may not sit on the *babots* (women's verandah) or go
round to that side of the line of huts.

They may not play with the girls and women in communal
games, or join a group of which women form part. For example,
they were not allowed to join the groups of story-tellers on my
verandah whenever there were women present, so in order to
induce the women to share in the story-telling I had to fix certain
nights on which the *wapi* boys were not allowed to come.

882 It is a very serious offence for a boy wearing the *wapi* to indulge
834 in sexual intercourse. One or two cases known to my informants
were spoken of with the same horror and disgust—which I think
● 684 was genuine—as was accorded to the worst type of incest. Punish-
ment in the olden days was death for both parties. They said that
until recently such a thing was unheard of—that is as it may be.

882 But I am pretty certain that this taboo is still strictly observed,
832 with rare exceptions. The following incident, however, is perhaps
worth recording for its bearing on this matter. One evening when

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water; cooking pots, bought from Malasang; and such baskets as they choose to make. Each woman also owns a hood for observing the rules of avoidance. Both sexes cherish their woven armlets, necklaces, and other ornaments, their pipes, and their decorated lime-pots, though these are now giving place to tins obtained from the white man. Most people now possess trade knives for cutting bush, weeding, &c., and some few also axes and adzes. This makes no claim to be an exhaustive list of personal possessions, but it does, I think, include the bulk of them. Although these people take pleasure in ownership, and are as delighted as children at the acquisition of, say, a specially large or good knife (I have seen a man doing a dance of joy at one which I had given him) or a string of beads, they do not seem to strive particularly to amass quantities of possessions, beyond what they need for their own use. 'Riches' consist of ceremonial currency and pigs, everything else is incidental. Ornamented spears used to rank in this category, and still do in the central mountain districts, there forming part of the transactions connected with marriage, as do also stone axes, which are no longer valued in the coastal districts.

Records of possessions.

To keep a record of the number of coco-nut trees owned by the inhabitants of the village, bundles of the stiff centre rib of the coco-nut leaf frond are kept, containing one rib for each tree. A tally of pigs is kept by making notches on a stick. All the pigs belonging to the village are recorded—or are supposed to be recorded—on one stick, but this does not mean that they are communally owned. These records are required by the Government and the bundles and sticks are given to the District Officer at his official visit. I do not think any record would be kept except for this requirement, and its accuracy is open to considerable doubt.

ATTITUDE TO THEFT

To steal ceremonial currency made of teeth (*imun*) is a major offence, one of the two such offences recognized by these people, the other being to take another man's wife, for which the same word (*a mot*) is used. The customary punishment is that the convicted person shall be taken to the beach and all who wish shall have the right to shoot at him with spears and arrows. He is,

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177 however, permitted to shoot in return, and as far as I could make
 684 out, the affair was generally hardly more than a form. This proce-
 685 dure is now, however, no longer permitted, matters of this kind
 being dealt with by the District Officer.

685 The theft of other property, even of pigs, is regarded as a minor
 offence, over which the injured parties are very angry and talk a
 great deal, but eventually agree to the settlement of the affair by
 the payment of a fine. I have a story of a man called Tianowan,
 living at Ruri, who stole a pig belonging to Mudidemets, which he
 killed and ate. He was made to pay back a pig to Mudidemets, which
 was killed and eaten by the two men together, 'then Mudidemets
 was not angry with Tianowan any more'. Another story tells how
 a group of boys were always stealing bananas belonging to a man
 who lived at a neighbouring village. One day he caught them, and
 brought them to his place, and held them prisoners. The *tsunaun*
 of their own village brought a length of *beroan* to pay the owner of
 the bananas to let them go; he said that was not enough, so the
 674 *tsunaun* paid him two lengths, and he let the boys go. I did not
 personally experience any cases of theft, although I neglected the
 advice of the planters to keep all my goods locked up. A boy about
 thirteen, living at Kurtatchi with his mother, but actually belong-
 ing to another village, had the reputation of being a thief (*ti a mot*).
 Every one knew this, and discussed it with disapprobation, and
 several people warned me not to allow him to come on to my
 verandah. But I never heard of his being punished for any definite
 theft, and I am uncertain how far the charges against him were
 true, and how far they were made because he did not really belong
 to the village, in which he was unpopular.

INTENTIONAL DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY

425 As noted elsewhere in greater detail, a man's pigs and coco-nut
 768 palms, and a woman's taro, are used, on the death of the owner, to
 provide food for the people who come to wail. But it is not only
 the produce that is taken, the coco-nut palms are cut down—or
 were, until the practice was forbidden by the Government as
 wasteful—and the garden laid waste. If articles such as ornaments
 are put into the grave they are sometimes, but not always, broken.
 (See account of burying of pillow on p. 492.)

152 There are also other occasions on which property is intentionally
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727 hanging to the tree for four days and four nights. Then they take him
266 down, and slit up his belly, and wash it, and take out the entrails. They
sing his skin, and scrape it, just as if he were a pig. His skin is white
underneath. They bury the head, and later on they take it up again and
take off the jaw and hang it up in the house. The body they cut into
slices, just as we cut up pigs, first they cut it off at the ankles, then at
the knees, then at the fork. They cook the pieces in an oven and eat
them with taro. This way of cooking a man is called *gohe*.

Some additional details concerning the treatment of a man
brought home alive were told by a young Petats man, who got
them from his father. He told them with evident enjoyment, and
appeared to regret that this sort of thing did not happen any more.

In times before, all the people used to fight. We always won all our
fights. They used to eat plenty of men. If a man was taken alive they
used to hang him up on a tree and cut pieces off his arm, and his leg,
and his shoulder. He would cry out and say: 'Do not cut me, let me go
home.' They would say: 'You are not at home now, you are in our
place, now we shall eat you.' They did not eat him because they were
hungry, but because he was their enemy.'

266 It appeared that the teller's father had not himself eaten human
flesh, but had been the son of a great warrior, and, as a small boy,
had witnessed the procedure he described. Children were never
[858 allowed to partake of it; if they did it was thought that they would
562 become dumb. Women did not usually eat it; the reason given
was 'because they were frightened'.

266 Two occasions on which human flesh was eaten as part of a
565 ceremony are known to me. One is that marking the elevation to
766 the rank of *tsunaun* of a man renowned in war (described on p. 47)
614 and the other, the burial of the head of an enemy who had been
eaten at the stone structure at Tiop, following the birth of a child
to a woman 'belonging to the lineage of the stones' (described on
p. 537). There are probably others, which did not come under my
notice.

266 Under certain prescribed circumstances the flesh of their own
681 people was eaten. This was in all cases done as a punishment for
having broken a strong taboo. The instances known to me are as
follows:

266 In case of adultery between relatives who stand to each other in the
681 relation of *wat/sit/sio* (see p. 68). Present punishment—banishment
of both from the village.